

5 Best Modern Filipino Writers

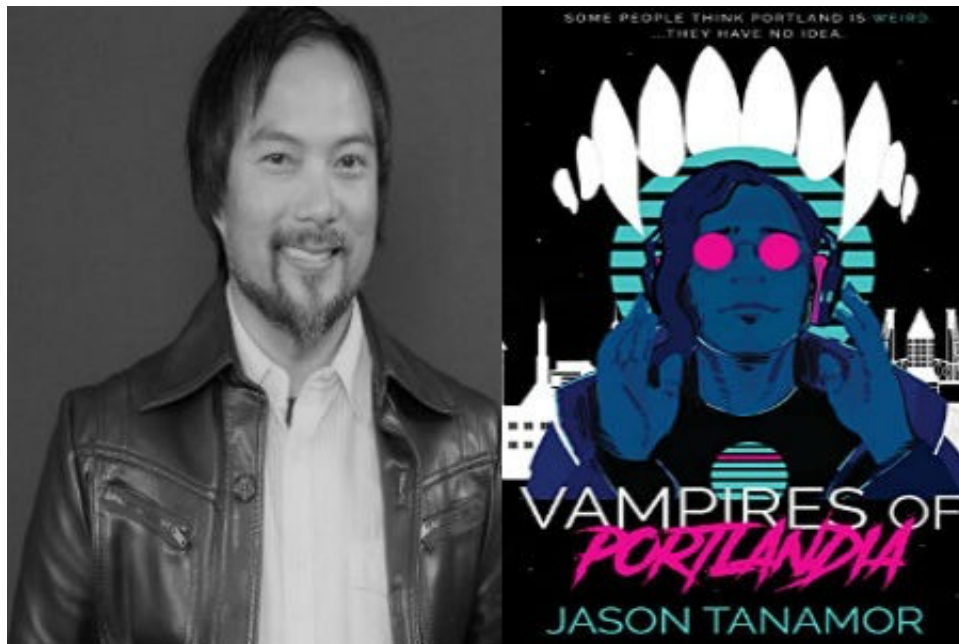
Nena Jimenez • September 05, 2020



From Jose Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* to Nick Joaquin's *Cave and Shadows*, the Pearl of the Orient has always been blessed with talented literary geniuses. While Filipino writers used to be unheard of in the mainstream industry, nowadays as books become more available to everyone, several Filipino writers had made a name for themselves in contemporary literature. With their books garnering sensation in the West, these writers inspired many not only here in the Philippines, but in Asia as a whole.

But what makes Filipino writing such a beloved category when it comes to books? Is it through their language and accent, known as Filipino-English (or Taglish), which emphasizes sentences that are short and quick-ending but also interpersonal? Or is it through Filipino themes of family, dogmatic love and persistence? Today, let us meet some of the best international Filipino writers, who have brought the nation prestige around the world. And let us see how they showed the world what Filipino writers could do.

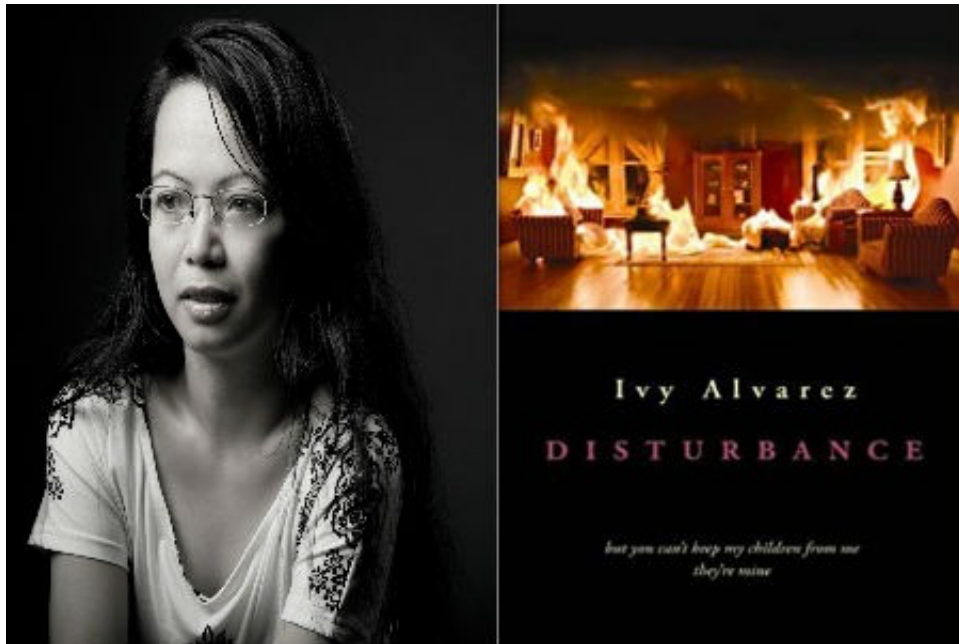
5. Jason Tanamor



In his own right, Jason Tanamor himself is already a badass, having a full-time job as a Contract Specialist for the US Army Corps of Engineers in Portland, Oregon. This Filipino-American has always wanted to become a writer, but life limitations common to us all Pinoys forced him to take an occupation that is “more practical”. This didn’t stop Jason however, as his passion for writing continued to be strong. He first started writing as a content writer for *Yahoo!*, getting to interview celebrities like Billy Corgan, Dane Cook and Pete Ross.

But this year, Jason wrote his first novel entitled *Vampires of Portlandia*, an urban fantasy story about a family of immigrant Filipino vampires. Jason based the story on his own experiences as an immigrant and his love for Filipino folklore. He also based many of his characters from actual relatives and friends he had known. In the following months, Jason would become a prolific author, genre-busting several novels such as *Drama Dolls*, *Anonymous*, *The Extraordinary Life of Shady Gray* and many more. What made Jason one of the best Filipino authors is his attitude of never shying away from any themes. He can write almost everything from horror, humor, fantasy, to even satire.

4. Ivy Alvarez



Probably the only poet on our list, Filipino-Australian Ivy Alvarez gained popularity in the West for her writing anthologies. Her career spanned from her time as an editor, being a champion in various slam poetries, and a lecturer to various universities such as the University of Chester. Her compilations of poems made her a household name in Australia.

The title *Disturbance* however, made her an international artist. It is a story that tackles issues on domestic violence, where the antagonist is a mad father who ended up killing his own family. This book brought her fame in Australia, the Philippines, and the United Kingdom. Her free-flowing style narrative poetry can be described as a cool breeze which would calm and relax, but would soon turn whipping and deadly as reality strikes you from all sides.

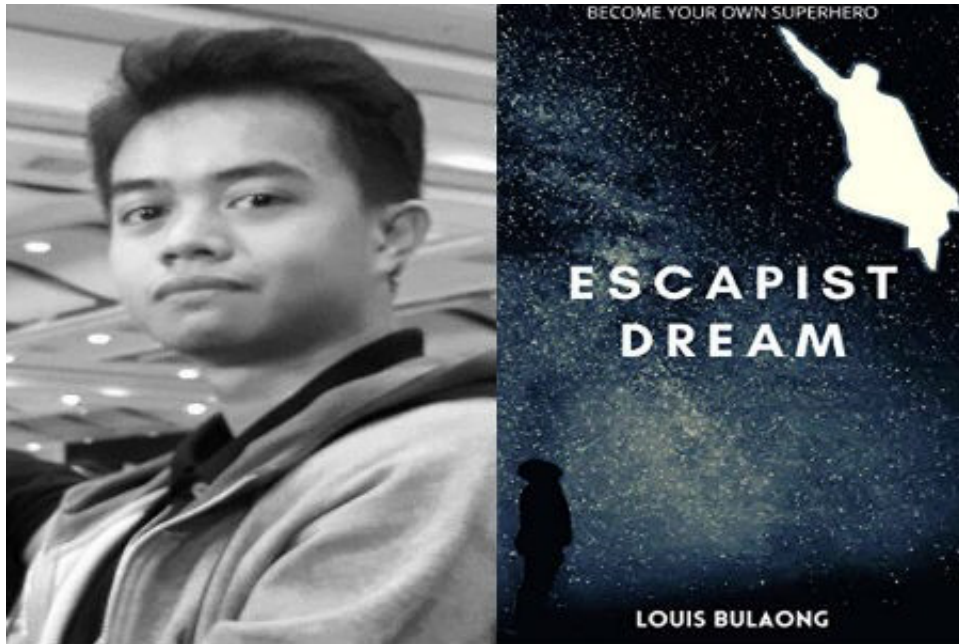
3. R.A. Gil



The next writer on our list shows us that having humble beginnings, like say being a mere fanfiction writer, can result in greatness in the world of literature later on. Raquel Ann Gil started her career as a simple 14-year old Wattpad writer, jotting down chapters during her spare time in school. Little did she know that her stories would later earn her hundreds of dedicated fans worldwide, blossoming her career to where she finally coveted the dream that all authors wanted: becoming a professional writer (in the employ of BLVNP Publishing).

Her work on *Knight: Celeste Academy*, a series which took almost a decade to finish, brought her the recognition that made it possible. It stars Valeriana Kerrigan, a demon-hunting knight in training, as she attempts to save both the modern world and the magical world from beasts and demons. Prepare your grammar books and thesaurus, as this book is filled with amazing literary writing courtesy of the author being a degree holder in Literature and English. But what really made the story so enduring are the amazing characters and magnificent world-building. If the US has *Game of Thrones*, and Japan has *Saint Seiya*, here in the Philippines we have *Knight: Celeste Academy*.

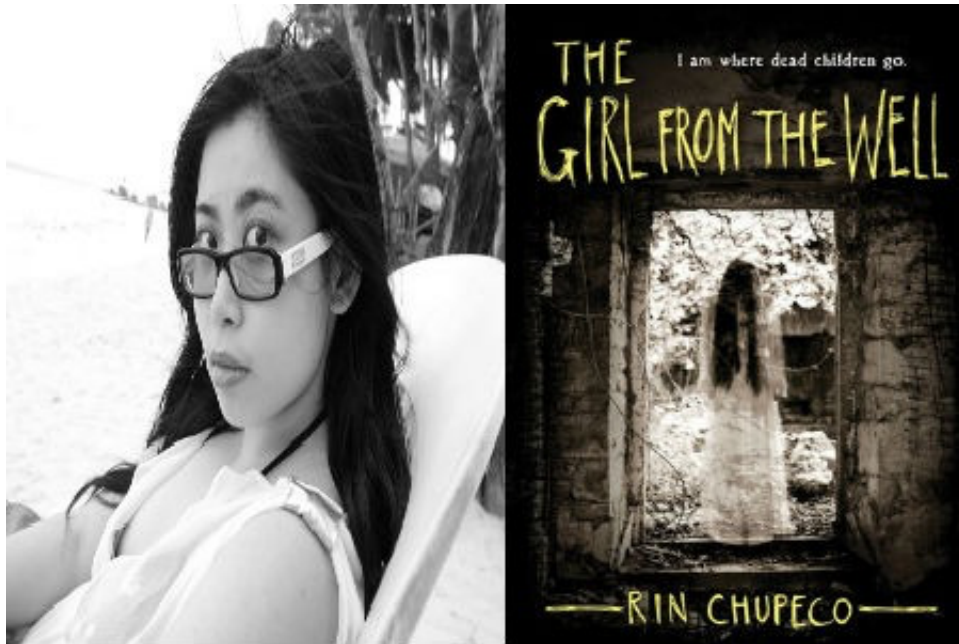
2. Louis Bulaong



Although the least popular of them all, freelance writer Louis Gabriel Bulaong is one of the most versatile and emotionally-driven Filipino writers around. He captured the world by storm with his science-fiction GameLit epic *Escapist Dream* in July 2020. Noted for his surrealism and wacky writing, Louis is recognized in the self-publishing industry for his ability to combine multiple popular genres in one amazing story. Where else can you read a story of a virtual reality world where comics, films, anime and video games come alive? Where geeks can gain superpowers and duke it out? As a psychology graduate, it seems Louis is one who is also capable of writing about themes of depression, trauma and loneliness very well.

What also set Louis apart is his work on Filipino history and culture. His book entitled *Bandido*, tells the story of crime in the early 2000s, especially those committed by the infamous Waray-Waray Gangs, and how poverty and neglect basically gave birth to criminals in the faraway provinces. He also wrote it as a way to prevent the younger generation from ever joining gangs.

1. Rin Chupeco



Of all the modern day Filipino writers out there, none is as influential and successful as Erin "Rin" Chupeco. She is one of the first natural-born Asian writers to make a name for herself in the YA genre. Her book entitled *Girl From The Well*, which is about a vengeful Japanese spirit named Okiku, received critical and commercial acclaim and was one of the first to be featured in news outlets nationwide. From *GMA News* to local newspapers, Rin Chupeco has become a household name when it comes to modern Filipino writing.

Unlike some of the self-published fiction writers here, her writing was so good that she instantly became a traditionally-published author. She is one of the first in her generation to have spawned a novel series in both the paperback and digital market. She too is a pioneer when it comes to liberalism in her country, and her books deal with themes about sexuality, religion and being progressive in general. What Rin had accomplished inspired many Filipino and Asian writers to take up writing and try to find success in mainstream literature.

So what do you guys think? If you ever plan on sitting down to read a book during quarantine, try to pick up a book from these great Filipino authors. Don't forget to show your support by sharing their work in Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. For aspiring Filipino writers out there, be inspired to pick up a pen and go on a writing escapade.

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